



The acclaimed and reward winning sequel, Half Life 2 is a first-person shooter, single player experience made by Valve that was developed and produced in 2004. It is a game about a former scientist named Gordon Freeman, going on a journey to fix a current dystopian world and save humanity with a group of humans forming a resistance to rebuild from the alien invasion they stopped long ago. While also solving puzzles, fighting enemies, doing simple platforming, and making story driven choices. I want to take this time to focus on the first 10 minutes or so of the game to study first how they design their levels, and how they improved upon their first game.



(Fig 1.)



(Fig 2.)

I love how the tutorial section of how to play the game is really baked into the level design! Seeing how you start on a train and have npcs walking to where you are supposed to be at, and this little gate line showing how the player can move in multiple directions. (Fig 1.) Even though this is a sequel game, they are not afraid of still trying to reteach the player. You also have this section here where you are following this guard as it allows you to sneak a peek into the rooms learning more about this world as this guy is interrogated. Then the guards shut the little eye slot. Then you come to this section where you are told to make a makeshift staircase to climb and crouch out the window (Fig 2.) which I like as it teaches the player more about the game via story and level design.





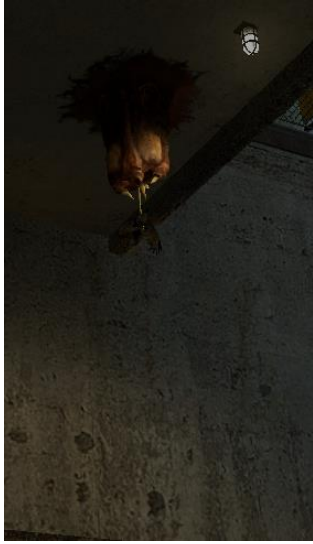
Then we come to the greatest scene of all time! The 'pick up that can' scene. I just like the funny scenes, also it teaches you about both the story and who your enemies are, as well as picking up objects. However, I am going to skip a bit of some of the slower bits and skip to the chase sequence where you must climb up an apartment building, going through floors, and narrow part of the roofs to escape the guards without a weapon. After this you enter a cutscene where they just explain the story, however they do explain how you can heal so fast.





After the cutscene, the game does kick into the fps mode, where the level design is really shown, like using passing trains as bridges, or having rooms with plenty of cover, and tight hallways. This I feel like where the Half Life series shines, is having a fun level that is very immersive with its themes. Most of the enemies in the start of the game are typical melee and range characters that can be killed with a few shots from your pistol. Even though I do feel like there is a bit too much that spawns in one area. It is both survivable and they do it

sparingly. Giving you breaks in between swarms.



There is also this neat thing I like where it introduces you to these trap enemies that suck you up and slowly drain your health. They introduce you to this by having it suck up and kill a bird as you walk by, giving you a heads up to watch out for these things. Even if you get caught, then it gives you plenty of time to react as well. They do this a lot for introducing new elements, which shows progression.

Well so far, that is how much I played, and really learned a lot from the time I played. I want to play more, but I have to limit myself.